

Message Text

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SUBJECT: WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS - MARCH 12 - 18, 1976

I. PSYCHOLOGICAL

1. A HEARTBEAT AWAY -- THE MANILA PRESS THIS WEEK WAS FULL OF THE HERETOFORE VERBOTEN DISCUSSION OF WHO WOULD SUCCEED PRESIDENT MARCOS IF SOMETHING SHOULD HAPPEN TO HIM. ALTHOUGH THE PRESIDENT ANNOUNCED LAST YEAR THAT HE HAD PREPARED A SECRET DECREE NAMING HIS SUCCESSOR, PUBLIC CURIOSITY HAS OVERTAKEN PRIVATE PRUDENCE AND VARIOUS GROUPS, INCLUDING SEVERAL SANGGUNIAN BAYANS, HAVE CALLED OR BEEN PROMPTED TO CALL ON MARCOS TO MAKE KNOWN HIS CHOICE.

GOVERNORS AND MAYORS IN LUZON HAVE ASKED THE PRESIDENT TO ISSUE A PUBLIC SUCCESSION DECREE OR TAKE THE ISSUE TO A REFERENDUM CONFIRMING HIS POWER TO ISSUE SUCH A DECREE. THE PRESIDENT'S OPPONENTS CONTEND MARCOS DOESN'T HAVE THE AUTHORITY TO NAME HIS OWN SUCCESSOR.

NEWSPAPER READERS, MEANWHILE, LOOKING FOR CLUES, GOT REMARKABLY LITTLE HELP FROM MANILA COLUMNISTS WHO

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SUPPOSEDLY HAVE THE PRESIDENT'S EAR. THEIR PROGNOSSES HAVE

BEEN AS VARIED AS THE RUMORS.

A SPATE OF RECENT ARTICLES IN THE AMERICAN PRESS (NEWSWEEK, NEW YORK TIMES, CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR) HAVE SPECULATED THE PRESIDENT'S WIFE WAS MANEUVERING FOR THE JOB, BUT IN A CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR ARTICLE (MARCH 11) ENTITLED "MANILA'S FIRST LADY IN WAITING," MRS. MARCOS REPORTEDLY SAID "BEING PRESIDENT IS A MAN'S JOB AND I USE TOO MUCH HEART."

2. PRESS TIRADES RUNNING DOWN -- THE TIMES JOURNAL CONTINUED ITS FRONT-PAGE VENDETTA AGAINST TWO U.S. CONSULAR OFFICERS WHO OUSTED AN OBSTREPEROUS FEMALE VIA APPLICANT A FORTNIGHT AGO AND AGAINST THE FLOW OF TAX-FREE GOODS FROM BASES PXs. THE NEWSPAPER REPORTED THAT THE "FLOWER OF PHILIPPINE WOMANHOOD" INVOLVED HAD BEEN ACCORDED A SYMPATHETIC HEARING BY THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND THAT A STRONG OFFICIAL PROTEST WAS IN THE OFFING. MEANWHILE THE EMBASSY STUCK TO ITS "NO COMMENT" POLICY DESPITE REPEATED BAITED QUERIES FROM CALLERS AND AT WEEK'S END THE JOURNAL'S GRUEL WAS GETTING THINNER AND THINNER.

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II. SIGNIFICANT ACTIVITIES

CULTURAL WEEK A SUCCESS - POST'S CULTURAL WEEK IN HONOR OF BICENTENNIAL PROVED A SOLID SUCCESS DESPITE SPOTTY TURNOUT FOR CONTEMPORARY CHAMBER ENSEMBLE. PACAF BAND PLAYED ITS "AMERICA 200" PROGRAM TO A PACKED HOUSE IN CCP'S LITTLE THEATER AND THREE CONTINUOUS INVITATIONAL SHOWINGS OF "THE EMIGRANT" AND "THE NEW LAND" WERE WELL ATTENDED. PRESS REVIEWS OF CCE PRAISED GROUP FOR SKILL AND SENSITIVITY. EVENING POST CALLED CONCERTS "EXCITING" AND DAILY EXPRESS' ROSALINA OROSA DUBBED SERIES "ONE OF MOST SIGNIFICANT MUSICAL EVENTS OF YEAR." ATTENDANCE AVERAGED AROUND 600 IN CULTURAL CENTER'S 1800A SEAT MAIN AUDITORIUM, BUT CROWDS WERE SURPRISINGLY ENTHUSIASTIC AND EAGER TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS NEW (FOR MOST FILIPINOS) MUSICAL MEDIUM.

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